



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Employment Commission
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Dolores A. Esser
Commissioner

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Richmond—Due to the increasing workload, the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) is temporarily hiring staff to assist those individuals filing for unemployment benefits. Thirty to forty staff will be added statewide.

Recent federal funding, which allows for contingency funding based on increased workloads, will pay for the extra services. That federal funding package also extends unemployment compensation for those whose benefits have expired, providing up to seven additional weeks of benefits to eligible individuals. Letters were mailed today to individuals who are eligible for extended benefits. Customers must file their Extended Unemployment Compensation claims on the forms provided in the mailing.

Customers are **encouraged** to file other claims online at www.VaEmploy.Com as a **first option**. They may also call the Customer Contact Center toll free at 1-866-832-2363 (TTY 1-866-241-9978). Typically, Mondays are the busiest day of the week for the Customer Contact Center and it is more difficult to get through. In an effort to accommodate its customers, the Virginia Employment Commission has extended the hours of operation of its Customer Contact Center. The Customer Contact Center phone lines are now open on Saturdays from 8:15 a.m. to noon in addition to Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The VEC is examining new strategies to provide services as numerous employers are laying off large numbers of staff. Many layoffs are not included in the current month's unemployment rate due to the fact that severance and other pay must be exhausted prior to an individual receiving unemployment benefits payments. Seasonal unemployment is a factor as well.

VEC Commissioner Dolores Esser said, "The VEC is working diligently to meet the needs of its customers and to respond to questions."

\$14.2 million was paid in unemployment insurance claims during the first week of December.

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